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Love and God

The dialogue one morning was started by a young Canadian, wearing a Lungi and a Kurta. He said he was twenty-three but looked barely out of his teens. He wore a silver cross around his neck. He said he had come across "I Am That" in a book-shop in Bombay the day before, and had started browsing through the first volume. It did not take him more than a few minutes to come to the conclusion (a) that he must buy both the volumes even if it meant and (b) that he must meet Shri Maharaj. He was lucky to get the two volumes at a concessional price because they had become shop-soiled. He had gone through both the volumes, reading almost continuously through the afternoon, evening and night, and had finished both the volumes a couple of hours ago, - and there he was!

Shri Maharaj: You are so young. I wonder since what age you have been interested in spiritual matters.

Visitor: I can scarcely remember any time when I was not interested in Love and God. I have a feeling that they are not different. When I sit in meditation, I often -

Shri Maharaj: Wait a moment. What exactly do you mean by meditation?

Visitor: I don't really know. All I do is to sit cross-legged, close my eyes, relax and sit quietly. I find my body relaxing and almost melting away, my mind or being or whatever merging with space, and the thought process gets suspended.

Shri M.: That's good. Please proceed.

Visitor: Quite often during meditation an overwhelming feeling of ecstatic love arises together with an effusion of well-being. I do not know what it is. It is during one such spell that I felt inspired to go to India, - and here I am.

Shri M.: How long will you be in Bombay?

Visitor: I really don't know. I rarely make any plans.

I have sufficient money to live very, very simply for about 15 days, and I have a return ticket.

Shri M. - Now tell me, what is it exactly that you want to know. Do you have any specific question.

Visitor: I was a very confused man when I landed in Bombay. I almost felt as if I was going out of my mind. I really don't know what took me to the book-shop because I do not do much reading. The moment I picked up the first volume of "I Am That" I experienced the same overpowering feeling that I get during meditation, and I felt faint. As I went on reading the book a weight seemed to lift from within me, and, as I am sitting here before you, I feel as if I am talking to myself. And what I am saying to myself seems like blasphemy. Because, I had a notion that Love was God. But Love is surely a concept and if love is a concept, God must also be a concept.

Shri M. - So, what is wrong in it?

Visitor - Now that YOU put it like that, there is no feeling of guilt in transforming God into a concept.

Shri M. - Actually, you said Love is God. what do you mean by the word "love". Do you mean 'love' as the opposite of 'hate'? Or do you really mean something else? - although, of course, no word can be adequate to describe God.

Visitor - I certainly do not mean by the word 'love' the opposite of 'hate'. I think what I mean is that 'love' means abstaining from discrimination as 'I' and the 'other'.

Shri M. - In other words, unity of being.

Visitor - What then is 'God' to whom I am expected to pray.

Shri M. - Let us talk about prayers later. Now then what exactly is this 'God' you are talking about? Is he not the very consciousness - the sense of being that one has - because of which you are able to ask questions. "I AM" itself is God. The seeking

itself is God. What is it that you love most? - is it not this 'I-AM', the ~~consciousness~~ conscious presence which you want to preserve at any cost? The seeking itself is God. In seeking you discover that 'you' are apart from this body-mind complex. ~~The consciousness~~ If you did not have consciousness, would you the world exist for you? - Would there be any idea of a God? and the consciousness in you, and the consciousness in me - are they different? Are they not separate only as concepts, seeking unity unconceived, - and is that not LOVE?

Visitor - Now I understand what is meant by "God is nearer to me than I am to myself."

Shri M - and also, remember what I am telling you now - There can be no proof of Reality other than union with IT

Visitor - What then is prayer - and what is the purpose?

Shri M. - Prayer, as it is generally understood, is nothing but begging for something. Actually, prayer means communion - unity - yoga.

Visitor - Everything now is so clear, as if a great deal of rubbish has suddenly been wiped clean.

Shri M. - Do you mean everything now appears clear? You seem to see everything clearly?

Visitor - No, No! It IS clear - so clear that I am now amazed that at any time it was not clear earlier. Various statements that I had read in the Bible which SEEMED important before now ~~were~~ are obvious. Statements like -

Before Abraham was - I AM
I and my father are ONE.
I am THAT-I-AM

Shri M. - Good. Now that you know what IT is all about, what sadhana will you do to obtain liberation from the supposed 'bondage'?

Visitor - Ah, Maharaj - you are now making fun of me.

Or are you testing me? Surely, now I KNOW and have realized that I AM THAT I AM, what is left to be done? and who is to do it? and for what purpose?
- Excellent - JUST BE.
- I shall, indeed.

Then the young Canadian prostrated before Shri Maharaj, his eyes brimming with Gratitude and Joy. Shri Maharaj asked him if he would be coming again, and the lad said: I honestly don't know. When he left, Shri Maharaj sat for quite some time, with his eyes closed, a gentlest of smiles on his lips.

I never saw the young Canadian again, though I have often wondered about him. ~~Maharaj often says that many people have come to him~~

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